to members of scheduled castes, who apply for it, in areas where they are subjected to harassment, booth capture and molestation of women etc. so as to protect themselves from the attacks of powerful sections; and

(b) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY): (a) and (b) Adequate provisions exist in the Arms Act, 1959 and the Arms Rules, 1962 for obtaining licences for fire arms for various purposes including self protection. Provisions of the said Act and Rules are uniformly applicable to all throughout the country and licences are granted by the concerned licensing authorities on the basis of genuine and proven need.

Current affairs programmes to private producers

3267. DR. JINENDRA KUMAR JAIN: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether current affairs programmes are still being given to private producers to produce; if not, what are the reasons therefor; and

(b) if so, (i) what is the official policy on selection and approval of current affairs programmes by private producers specifically, what are the criteria for approval and rejection (ii) whether there is any provision for recording reasons for rejection of proposals for such programmes; if not, the reasons therefor; if so, state these provisions; what has been the record of their implementation (iii) whether there is any procedure for appeal against a decision to reject particular proposals; if not, the reasons therefor; if so, what are these procedures; (iv) whether there is any set of criteria to check the arbitrary approval or rejection of such programmes; if not the reasons therefor; if so, what are the details thereof and (v) in what manner Government ensure that patently political or personal motives do not enter such decisions?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. UPENDRA): (a) Doordarshan continues to assign production of programmes on current affairs to cutside Producers as and when considered necessary.

(b) Such factors as topicality of the subject, treatment/approach proposed to be given, experience of the technical crew and the time schedule for production of the programmes are taken into account in the matter of acceptance or rejection of such proposals. It is not always possible to give the precise reasons on the basis of which a particular proposal has been rejected because an overall view is required to be taken based on totality of circumstances. These proposals are examined at different levels and finally by a duly constituted Committee and this multi-level decision making process ensures that decisions taken are not arbitrary in nature. However, the Producer is free to request for a review and his request is considered on merits.

Official Policy of Censorship

3268. DR. JINENDRA KUMAR JAIN: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) what is the official policy on censorship to Current Affairs Programmes;

(b) whether there are any objective guidelines for what may or may not be permitted on Doordarshan; if so, what are the details thereof; if not, what are the reasons therefor;